

BIRTHDAY

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ing, continuously operating business.

There. We said it and we're glad.

So certain are we of our right to this title that we issue the following challenge: If anyone out there knows of a Utah business that was formed before June 15, 1850, and has been in continuous operation ever since, let us know.

We will not only publicly eat humble crow if an older company exists, we will write an article singing the praises of this paragon of business acumen that, like the *Deseret News*, has managed to survive wars, recessions, depressions, inflation, high interest rates and all the other low points of the past 1.39 centuries.

But we think we're on safe ground here. For one thing, we have in our possession the first copy of the *Deseret News*, so there's no problem proving when we started. And we can pull up any copy of any date since to prove we've never been out of business.

And we've done our homework on early pioneer businesses. That there were businesses started in Utah in those three years between the arrival of the first party of Mormon pioneers and the start-up of the *News* in 1850, there is no doubt. But to the best of our knowledge and research, none is still operating today.

In 1976, the U.S. Small Business Administration honored three of the state's oldest companies "for their sound business practices and prizing leadership in the development of society."

They are the *Deseret News*, founded in 1850; Thorn Cig Co., 1884; and Kelly Co., 1884. Others include Barnes Banking Co., 1880; American Linen Corp., 1889; and others.

Sadly, the past decade has been kind to many old-line firms that have either ceased business or been merged into other companies. Included in that list are Dinwoodey's Furniture, Wells Trust, Tracy's,



PHOTOGRAPHY/ DON GRAVSTON

The rumble caused by the \$37 million renovation project under the *News* offices is the sound of progress.

We're 139 years old today

Utah's oldest continuously operating business issues challenge

Let all who would have a good paper, their talents and time never abuse; Since 'tis said, by the wise and the humored,

That the best in the world is the "News," Then ye who so long have been thinking What paper this year you will choose, Come trip gaily up to the office, And subscribe for the "Deseret News."

By Max B. Knudson
Deseret News business editor 6-15-89

OK, so it's not great poetry, but we're partial to it anyway. For one thing, it appeared on the back page of the very first *Deseret News*, published June 15, 1850 — 139 years ago today. For another, we think the author stated the facts quite accurately. What's that? You believe there might be

those who would dispute our (anonymous) 19th-century poet's claim that "the best in the world is the *News*"? No problem. We've always been willing to listen to points of view other than our own.

But in celebration of our 139th birthday, we're going to set modesty aside for a moment and make another bold claim. Here it is: The *Deseret News* is Utah's oldest exist-

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Deseret News manager moves to senior editor

William B. Smart, editor and general manager of the Deseret News for the past 14 years, will relinquish the post to become senior editor of the paper.

The change was announced Thursday by President Thomas S. Monson, to become effective Oct. 15.

Smart's duties will be absorbed by Publisher Wm. James Mortimer, who will become editor and publisher, and by Managing Editor J Malan Heslop.

"We commend Bill for the outstanding leadership he has shown the paper during the time he has served as general manager," said President Monson, second counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who also serves as chairman of the board and president of the company. He said he looks forward to Smart's further contributions in his new position.



Wm. James Mortimer



William B. Smart

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SMART

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Appointed executive editor in 1966 and editor and general manager in 1972, Smart has served as editor longer than anyone else in the 136-year history of the paper. The longest previous tenure was that of Charles W. Penrose, who served 12 years from 1880 to 1892.

Under Smart's direction, the paper has won 28 of 50 first-place awards given to newspapers during the past 12 years for writing and editorial excellence in the annual statewide competitions of the Society of Professional Journalists. It is the only paper ever cited for overall excellence among members of the Associated Press in the Utah-Idaho-western Washington region.

Smart joined the Deseret News in 1948 as a reporter and became editor of the editorial page in 1952. During the 14 years he served in that capacity, he won several national awards for

editorial writing. He has served as a Pulitzer juror and several terms as a member of the ethics and freedom of information committees of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

He was cited for outstanding service to journalism by Brigham Young University in 1977 and the University of Utah in 1978.

Deseret News readers have read his reports from Antarctica, Africa, China and the Far East, Europe, Cuba and South America.

He is a director of many state and regional cultural and civic organizations, has served as president of the Provo-Jordan River Parkway Foundation and currently is president of the Utah Innovation Foundation.

"It has been a great honor to serve with you in building this newspaper," Smart told the staff, "and I am proud of the excellence we have achieved together. But I must confess my relief at getting out from under the daily management pressures and having the freedom to write and consult with management in a continuing quest for excellence."